

By: Representative Dickson

To: Public Health and Human Services

HOUSE BILL NO. 1088

1 AN ACT TO CREATE A STUDY COMMISSION ON THE TEMPORARY
2 ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE A REPORT
3 TO THE 2008 REGULAR SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE; TO MAKE
4 RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE STATE PROGRAM'S PROGRESS OVER THE PAST 10
5 YEARS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

7 SECTION 1. (1) There is created a Study Commission on the
8 Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Program, to
9 establish measurable health goals for the State of Mississippi.
10 The commission shall make recommendations on all aspects of the
11 state program's progress over the past ten (10) years. The
12 commission shall, at a minimum, study and report to the 2008
13 Regular Session of the Legislature on the following:

14 (a) The outcome of state welfare programs for the last
15 ten (10) years.

16 (b) The economic climate, in terms of looking for
17 savings in state welfare programs.

18 (c) The economy's potential to increase the number of
19 welfare recipients/participants, as well as increasing
20 expenditures in such areas as child care, which are necessary to
21 keep recipients in the workforce.

22 (d) Mississippi's struggle to resolve the issue of
23 long-term clients.

24 (e) The state's role in aiding those in need of help
25 with substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence and
26 learning disabilities.

27 (f) The state's ability to continue the innovative
28 programs that have been established in recent years, including:

29 (i) Educational after school programs;
30 (ii) Early childhood development programs; and
31 (iii) Teen pregnancy programs.

32 (g) Viability of programs to last based upon the
33 state's economy and wealth.

34 (h) The state's flexibility in using the TANF block
35 grant by meeting the federal work mandates complying with the five
36 (5) year time limit on benefits.

37 (i) Families' ability to move toward self-sufficiency.

38 (j) The outlook for welfare parents that have found
39 work at the entry level jobs.

40 (k) Parents' inability to support their families.

41 (l) Means of increasing work participation among
42 recipients of TANF benefits.

43 (m) Making welfare work on a fixed budget.

44 The commission shall make a report of its findings and
45 recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2007, including
46 any recommended legislation.

47 (2) The commission shall be composed of the following
48 fourteen (14) members:

49 (a) The Chairmen of the Senate and House Appropriation
50 Committees;

51 (b) The Chairmen of the Senate and House Public Health
52 and Welfare (Human Services) Committees;

53 (c) One (1) Senator to be appointed by the Lieutenant
54 Governor;

55 (d) One (1) Representative to be appointed by the
56 Speaker of the House;

57 (e) One (1) member of the State Board for Community and
58 Junior Colleges;

59 (f) The Executive Director of the State Department of
60 Health, or his designee;

61 (g) One (1) member from the Department of Human
62 Services' Division of Foster Care;

63 (h) The Executive Director of the Department of
64 Rehabilitative Services, or his designee;

65 (i) The Executive Director of the Mississippi
66 Department of Employment Security, or his designee;

67 (j) The Executive Director of the Department of Mental
68 Health, or his designee; and

69 (k) Two (2) recipients of TANF benefits.

70 (3) Appointments shall be made within thirty (30) days after
71 the effective date of this act. The commission shall hold its
72 first meeting before August 1, 2007. The Chairmen of the Senate
73 and House Public Health and Welfare (Human Services) Committees
74 shall serve as co-chairmen of the commission.

75 (4) A majority of the members of the commission shall
76 constitute a quorum. In the adoption of rules, resolutions and
77 reports, an affirmative vote of a majority of the members shall be
78 required. All members shall be notified in writing of all
79 meetings, such notices to be mailed at least five (5) days before
80 the date on which a meeting is to be held.

81 (5) Members of the commission shall receive the customary
82 per diem compensation, expense reimbursement and mileage for
83 attending commission meetings as provided in sections 25-3-41 and
84 25-3-69.

85 (6) The commission is authorized to accept funds from any
86 source, public or private, to be expended in implementing its
87 duties under this section

88 (7) To effectuate the purposes of this section, any
89 department, division, board, bureau, commission or agency of the
90 state or any political subdivision thereof, shall, at the request
91 of the co-chairmen of the commission, provide such facilities,
92 assistance and data as will enable the commission to properly
93 carry out its duties.

94 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
95 and after July 1, 2007.